

Subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. Nita Lowey

May 17, 2012

"Thank you, Chairwoman Granger and Chairman Rogers.

"It is appropriate that we are considering the State & Foreign Operations bill at the same time as evaluating funding for the Department of Defense: both bills encompass critical components of our national security. While perhaps less obvious than weapons and military programs the programs implemented by the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as the other agencies in this bill, represent long-term investments in security and stability. They are a down payment for a peaceful future and cuts come with great risk to our nation's security and future prosperity.

"I am therefore extremely disappointed in the allocation for these critical programs which shortchanges our diplomatic and development efforts, and could weaken America's standing in the world.

"As we move forward I will be working to address a number of very serious concerns with the bill; however, several important accounts are fully funded, and there is language in both the bill and report that reflects top national priorities. I want to thank Chairwoman Granger for working cooperatively with me to include these provisions. For example, the bill includes:

- Full funding for Israel as well as continued conditions on aid to the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, and other countries in the region;
- Ongoing restrictions on Iran, as part of our effort to prevent the Iranian regime from acquiring a nuclear weapon;
- Increased funding for Jordan, reflecting the critical role that country plays in the Middle East;
- Full funding for basic education programs, which are essential to fostering healthy, democratic

societies;

- Robust funding for our global health efforts, through which we save thousands of lives each year;
- Support for multilateral health programs, including the Global Fund and GAVI, which allow us to leverage our investments with funds from the international community;
- Language highlighting the importance of USAID's efforts to combat malnutrition, which is fundamental to many other development programs;
- Language calling on the Administration to develop a strategy for increasing access to qualified health workers, which is an important step to building local capacity;
- Continued strong language on gender and efforts to eliminate gender-based violence;
- Robust funding for our public diplomacy programs as well as for the Broadcasting Board of Governors;
- Strong funding for the Peace Corps as well as our Educational and Cultural Exchange programs, both of which offer opportunities for Americans to interact directly with local populations; and
- Full funding for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, whose programs are delivering promising results.

That said, the bill also contains cuts and policy riders that are very problematic:

- Deep cuts to multilateral organizations, including the United Nations and the international development banks, will weaken U.S. influence. These organizations do significant and important work throughout the world, including supporting U.S. efforts in places like Afghanistan and Iraq.
- The lack of a working capital fund impedes USAID's ability to implement the oversight and accountability requirements that we all agree are critical to our international development work. We should not be setting USAID up to fail.
- The bill rolls back the cap on U.S. contributions to peacekeeping activities and limits the U.S. contribution to current year levels, which will not only underfund these activities but will put the U.S. into arrears at the UN.
- The absence of human rights conditions on aid to Mexico, Colombia, and Central America sends a troubling signal that the U.S. either no longer prioritizes human rights, or that these countries have adequately addressed all human rights concerns, neither of which is the case.
- Substantial cuts to bilateral economic assistance will limit our ability to engage with critical partners and open potential new markets for American goods.
- And finally, the counterproductive, harmful, and unnecessarily divisive cuts and policy riders – including reinstatement of the global gag rule and a ban on funding for the United National Population Fund – on international family planning programs will leave millions of women without access to critical and often life-saving health services, and will result in 1.4 million more abortions next year. It is unconscionable that the majority insists on including these provisions, which run counter to our shared goals of saving mothers' and children's lives, and reducing unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

"The allocation for this bill is inadequate. However, I want to again thank the Chairwoman for her cooperation with us in making many hard choices. I also want to thank the staff for their hard work: Anne Marie Chotvacs, Craig Higgins, Alice Hogans, Susan Adams, Clelia Alvarado, Jamie Guinn, Johnnie Kaberle, and Scott Alexander; as well as my staff: Steve Marchese, Erin

Kolodjeski, and Talia Dubovi.

"The programs and initiatives in this bill are strongly supported by the military, the faith community, and national business leaders because they are essential to our national security, our moral leadership, and our economic prosperity. I hope we can all work together to improve this bill as we move through the appropriations process."